

May 9, 1973

Confidential Claim Retracted

Authorized by: SE

Date: 6/25/73

ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

THE ANACONDA COMPANY
P-10 UNDERGROUND URANIUM
MINING PROJECT

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The site of the proposed underground mining activity is located within the boundaries of the Anaconda Company's present lease and constitutes a change of operation for this small section of the lease from open pit to a small underground mining project.

The operation has an expected life of 5-1/2 years with some 464,500 tons of ore expected to be extracted. Activity is scheduled to commence on July 1, 1973, with plans calling for shaft sinking, station cutting and development work to be accomplished during the balance of the year and the first part of 1974. Anaconda expects to start mining ore by July 1, 1974, and will maintain production thereafter at a rate of 500-750 tons per day until exhaustion of the ore body during 1977.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The immediate area is classified as "rough broken" or "stony land" range site. This type of land has useable vegetation for grazing but due to steep terrain, rock escarpments and rock formations forming natural barriers the area is not used for grazing.

Blue grama, Sand dropseed, Sixweeks grama, Fourwing saltbush, Rabbitbrush and loco weed are the main vegetative species growing throughout the rocky escarpments.

Wildlife species visiting this vicinity are jackrabbits, rattlesnakes, quail and occasionally a coyote passing through the area.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PROPOSAL

1. General

The proposed underground operation is within the area that was leased to the Anaconda Company in March of 1952. The entire leased area is posted and not open to public inspection or use owing to the hazards created by the mining operations. The underground operation will have very little impact on the immediate area which has been subject to open pit mining.

2. Water Discharge

The ore bodies are located in strata which is naturally drained by surrounding ravines and arroyos. Sealed earthfill settling ponds will be established in

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order to settle out all particulate matter from the anticipated mine water and evaporate the water rather than let it overflow into the dry stream channels.

3. Sewage Lagoons

Sewage lagoons will be constructed northeast of the main shaft of sufficient capacity to handle all of the toilet, shower and like wastes created at the mine site. Suitable sites for the settling ponds and sewer lagoons are restricted due to the rough and rocky terrain; therefore, it is not possible to place these facilities where they cannot be seen from Highway #279.

4. Excavation and Mining Waste

The excavation and waste from the mining operation will be dumped in a manner that will coincide with the terrain. The steep terrain and sharp drainages will be utilized in disposing of the mining waste. The dump piles will be on the contour and will vary from 5 to 36 feet with the side slopes not less than 2-1/2 to 1 to provide a better base for revegetation.

5. Historical and Archaeological Consideration

No Indian ruins, burial or religiously significant sites are situated in or near the mining area.

IV. MITIGATING MEASURES IN PROPOSAL

The waste dumps will be on the contour and reseeded to native vegetative species. In addition the settling ponds and sewage lagoons will be restored as nearly as possible to natural conditions. At the end of the operation the mine openings will be sealed in accordance with U. S. Geological Survey specifications.

V. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The waste dumps will be noticeable and bare looking until vegetation is established. The settling pond and sewage lagoon will be seen from Highway 279.

VI. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The benefits of short-term use of this area clearly outweighs the adverse impact of the proposal in terms of economic gain to the Laguna tribal members. The possibilities of reinvesting the capital gain in more economically productive programs are obvious in today's economy.

VII. ALTERNATIVES TO PROPOSAL

The ore body could be mined by a strip mining process that would increase the environmental impact.

VIII. CONSULTATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The plan and operation of this project is approved and supervised by the United States Geological Survey Mining Engineers.



Mark J. Stevens,
Agency Environmental Assessment
Committee

May 9, 197

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

THE ANACONDA COMPANY
P-10 UNDERGROUND URANIUM
MINING PROJECT

After reviewing the environmental assessment and making an appraisal of the environmental impact the proposal will have on the immediate and local areas, the impact is not significant; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.



Mark J. Stevens,
Agency Environmental Assessment
Committee